

OFFICE OF THE CLERK WISCONSIN COURT OF APPEALS

110 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE 215 P.O. Box 1688

MADISON, WISCONSIN 53701-1688

Telephone (608) 266-1880 TTY: (800) 947-3529 Facsimile (608) 267-0640 Web Site: www.wicourts.gov

DISTRICT II

May 15, 2019

To:

Hon. Paul V. Malloy Circuit Court Judge Ozaukee County Circuit Court 1201 S. Spring St. Port Washington, WI 53074-0994

Marylou Mueller Clerk of Circuit Court Ozaukee County Circuit Court 1201 S. Spring St. Port Washington, WI 53074-0994 Matthew R. Jelenchick Niebler, Pyzyk, Roth & Carrig LLP N94 W17900 Appleton Ave., #200 P.O. Box 444 Menomonee Falls, WI 53052-0444

Nick Burkett Aaron M. Ninnemann Gerbers Law, S.C. 2391 Holmgren Way, Ste. A Green Bay, WI 54304

You are hereby notified that the Court has entered the following opinion and order:

2018AP1409

Schneider Excavating, Inc. v. Bayland Buildings, Inc. (L.C. #2016CV25)

Before Neubauer, C.J., Reilly, P.J., and Gundrum, J.

Summary disposition orders may not be cited in any court of this state as precedent or authority, except for the limited purposes specified in WIS. STAT. RULE 809.23(3).

Bayland Buildings, Inc. appeals from a judgment in favor of Schneider Excavating, Inc. following a court trial. Bayland does not appeal any issue regarding the court trial or damages awarded but asks that we vacate the judgment against it on the grounds that the court erroneously exercised its discretion in denying its motion to consolidate this action with *Bayland Buildings*, *Inc. v. Spirit Master Funding VIII*, *LLC*, Ozaukee County case No. 2015CV443. Based upon our review of the record, we conclude at conference that the court properly exercised its

discretion and that this case is appropriate for summary disposition. WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21 (2017-18). We affirm the judgment.

Bayland served as general contractor for a large construction project. Schneider was a subcontractor of Bayland's. Schneider's January 27, 2016 complaint alleged it was due \$257,239.23 from Bayland for work it performed. In a separate but related action, Bayland sued Spirit Master seeking repayment of costs Bayland claimed it was due under the general contract.² Bayland did not name Schneider as an interested party in its lawsuit against Spirit Master.

Bayland sought consolidation of this case and the Spirit Master action, arguing that consolidation was warranted as both cases arose from the same transaction and had similar issues of fact and law. Further, consolidation would save expenses and promote judicial efficiency, and separate trials could render different results. Following briefing and a hearing, the circuit court denied the motion to consolidate on the grounds that the action was one which was

more complicated than the type of case that I would consolidate just as a matter of judicial efficiency....

I think the thing to do is to give Schneider their trial date fairly quickly and get this on the book....

I just have a sense that it's going to be more complicated for the finder of fact to go through these machinations where you have—first, you have the builder, the excavator, the property owner. The building is sold to another company, and you have foreclosure issues. It just seems to me that it would be streamlining things if we did it as two instead of one.

¹ All references to the Wisconsin Statutes are to the 2017-18 version unless otherwise noted.

² For a more detailed factual history in this related case see *Bayland Buildings, Inc. v. Spirit Master Funding VIII, LLC*, 2017 WI App 42, 377 Wis. 2d 149, 900 N.W.2d 94.

Bayland acknowledges that consolidation is a discretionary decision for a circuit court. Bayland argues, however, that the court erroneously exercised its discretion "by putting undue emphasis on irrelevant or less significant factors to the detriment of relevant factors and by making an error in its application of the law." Having reviewed the entire record, we disagree and conclude the court properly exercised its discretion in allowing Schneider its day in court, especially given that when Bayland commenced its suit against Spirit Master, which was prior to the commencement of this action, it did not consider Schneider an indispensable party. Most importantly, Bayland does not even suggest that it suffered any prejudice as a result of the denial of its consolidation motion. Bayland does not challenge any finding of fact or conclusion of law from the five-day trial that occurred following the denial of its consolidation motion and which resulted in a judgment of \$394,368.42 against Bayland.

The record is clear that the court examined all facts relating to Bayland's motion to consolidate, properly applied a discretionary standard to the motion, utilized a demonstrative rational process (as enunciated in its oral ruling), and reached a conclusion that a reasonable judge could reach.

Upon the foregoing reasons,

IT IS ORDERED that the judgment is summarily affirmed pursuant to Wis. STAT. RULE 809.21.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this summary disposition order will not be published.

Sheila T. Reiff Clerk of Court of Appeals